

## **CA Dungeness Crab Pot Fishery**

**Fishing gear type:** Trap/Pot

**Current category:** Category II\*

**Basis for classification on LOF:** Based on a serious injury of a humpback whale (CA/OR/WA stock) in 2008, resulting in an annual mortality and serious injury rate of 0.2 animals per year (when averaged over five years) or 1.% of the stock's PBR of 11.3.

**Current list of marine mammal species/stocks injured/killed (a <sup>(1)</sup> indicates those stocks driving the fishery's classification):** Gray whale, Eastern North Pacific; Humpback whale, CA/OR/WA <sup>(1)</sup>.

**Estimated number of current participants:** 534

**Take Reduction Teams/Plans that affect this fishery:** None.

**Year added to the LOF:** 1996

**Category when originally listed:** Category III

**Basis for original classification on the LOF:** Listed as Category III because there was no observer, logbook, or stranding data available.

**Estimated number of participants when originally listed:** 1,475

**Past names, if any:** WA/OR/CA crab pot (until 2009).

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**Gear description/method for fishing:** The cylindrical or rectangular pots used in the fishery are buoyed, or fished, individually, although fishing strings of multiple traps are allowed in the central region. There is no limit on the number of traps which may operated by a fisherman at one time.

**Target species:** Dungeness crab.

**Spatial/temporal distribution of effort:** This fishery operates along the central and northern coastal waters of CA in depths typically from 10–40 fathoms. The fishery is divided into two management areas. The central region south of the Mendocino-Sonoma county line) is open November 15–June 30. The northern region (north of the Mendocino-Sonoma county line) can open on December 1, but may be delayed by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) based on the condition of market crabs, and continues until July 15.

**Levels of observer coverage each year<sup>†</sup>:** There has not been observer coverage in this fishery.

**Management and regulations:** This is a limited access fishery managed in part by the State of CA and the Tri-State Committee agreement for Dungeness crab, which also includes the states of OR and WA. There is also a California Dungeness Crab Task Force, created in 2009, to review and recommend management measures.

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\* The fishery is classified based on mortalities and serious injuries of a marine mammal stock greater than 1% and less than 50% (Category II) of the stock's Potential Biological Removal (PBR) level.

<sup>†</sup> Observer coverage levels include the latest information reported in the most current final Stock Assessment Reports (SAR).

## History of Changes on the LOF

### 2011 LOF:

- Removed the superscript “2” after the fishery and added a superscript “1” after humpback whale (CA/OR/WA stock) in the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery (indicating that serious injury or mortality of this stock in this fishery is driving the Category II classification of this fishery). In 2008, NMFS received two reports of humpback whales entangled in, and seriously injured by, pot/trap fishing gear off the coast of California. NMFS determined that one humpback whale was entangled and seriously injured in “CA Dungeness crab pot” fishery gear off of Moss Landing. One serious injury or mortality of a humpback whale (CA/OR/WA stock) results in an annual mortality and serious injury rate of 0.2 animals per year (when averaged over five years) or 1.7 percent of the stock’s PBR of 11.3. Therefore, this fishery is now classified based upon the level of serious injury or mortality of humpback whales (CA/OR/WA stock) rather than by analogy.
- Estimated number of participants was updated from 625 to 534.

### 2009 LOF:

- Split from the Category III “WA/OR/CA crab pot” fishery and listed as a separate Category II fishery by analogy to other Category II west coast trap/pot fisheries. Two reported humpback whale serious injury entanglements (one in August 2005 off the Channel Islands, CA, and one in December, 2005, off San Francisco, CA) could not be identified to a specific type of pot or trap fishery by gear type. The CA Dungeness crab pot fishery operates with similar gear as that observed and in the same location as the confirmed humpback whale serious injury events. Therefore, NMFS categorized the “CA Dungeness crab pot” fishery as a Category II fishery by analogy to the Category II “CA spot prawn” fishery.
- This fishery has 625 participants.
- Added a superscript “2” after this fishery in Table 2, indicating that the fishery is classified by analogy.
- Added the following species/stocks to the list of species/stocks incidentally killed/injured in this fishery:
  - Humpback whales (WA/OR/CA stock): Based on two serious injury entanglement events from 2002-2006 that could not be identified to a pot or trap fishery by gear type. This fishery operates with similar gear in the same location as the confirmed humpback whale serious injury events.
  - Gray whales (Eastern North Pacific stock): Entanglements of gray whales in trap and pot gear have been reported; however, NMFS had not yet determined which specific fisheries were involved. Gray whales were added to the list of species/stocks killed or injured in the Category III “WA/OR/CA crab pot” (from which this fishery is split) in 2005; therefore, it remained listed under this separate fishery. Data related to interactions with gray whales and the newly categorized Category II trap and pot fisheries will be reviewed and discussed in future LOFs.

*Changes on the LOF when the “CA Dungeness crab pot” fishery was included in the larger “WA/OR/CA crab pot” fishery*

2007 LOF: Added humpback whale (Eastern North Pacific) to the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery based on 14 sightings of humpback whales entangled in trap (11 cases) or pot (3 cases) gear between 2000 and 2005. Data was insufficient to warrant elevation to Category II for the 2007 LOF, but NMFS stated its intent to monitor trap/pot interactions with large whales on the west coast and revisit classification in future LOFs, if warranted.

2005 LOF: Added gray whales (Eastern North Pacific) to the list of species/stocks killed/injured in this fishery because of an interaction documented by the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program and NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement.